

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Remarks at a Greeting With Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Madrid, Spain

June 29, 2022

President Biden. Well, Jens, thank you very much for having me this morning. And, you know, we've got a big agenda, and great to be with you to kick off the—I think is a history-making summit. And we talked about this for a year, and now we're here.

Our meetings today—we're going to approve a new NATO Strategic Concept and reaffirm the unity and determination of our alliance to defend every inch of NATO territory. And article 5 is sacrosanct, and we mean it when we say, "An attack against one is an attack against all"—every inch.

And so, at this summit, the full alliance is going to welcome Finland and Sweden, their historic application for membership. And their decision to move away from neutrality and the tradition of neutrality to join NATO alliance is going to make us stronger and more secure, and NATO stronger.

We're sending an unmistakable message, in my view—and I think yours as well—that NATO is strong, united, and the steps we're taking during this summit are going to further augment our collective strength.

To that end, today I'm announcing the United States will enhance our force posture in Europe and respond to the changed security environment, as well as strengthening our collective security.

Earlier this year, we surged 20,000 additional U.S. forces to Europe to bolster our alliance in response to Russia's aggressive move, bringing our force total in Europe to 100,000. We're going to continue to adjust our posture based on the threat, in close consultation with our allies.

Here in Spain, we're going to work with our ally to increase U.S. Navy destroyers stationed in Spain's Rota naval base from three to—from four to six destroyers. In Poland, we're going to establish a permanent headquarters for the U.S. Fifth Army Corps and—strengthening our U.S.-NATO interoperability across the entire eastern flank.

We're going to maintain additional rotational brigade—which is 3,000 fighters and another 2,000 personnel—combat team here in Europe, headquartered in Romania. And we're going to enhance our rotational deployments in the Baltic States. And we're going to send two additional F-35 squadrons to the U.K. and station additional air defense and other capabilities in Germany and in Italy.

And together, our allies—we're going to make sure that NATO is ready to meet threats from all directions, across every domain: land, air, and the sea.

In a moment when Putin has shattered peace in Europe and attacked the very, very tenets of a rule-based order, the United States and our allies, we're going to step up. We're stepping up. We're proving that NATO is more needed now than it ever has been and it's as important as it has ever been.

So I want to thank you, Jens, for leading the alliance through this crisis and for your work to strengthen NATO for all the challenges that lie ahead. And I genuinely look forward to our discussion today.

And, again, thank you for your leadership. It's important.

Secretary General Stoltenberg. Thank you so much, President Biden, dear Joe. It's really great to see you here in Madrid so soon after we met in the White House in Washington. And thank you for your personal leadership and the U.S. commitment to NATO, to European security demonstrated by the announcement—the announcements you just made to further increase U.S. presence in Europe.

And this really demonstrates your decisive leadership in strengthening the transatlantic bond, and we also see that in the unwavering support from you and from the United States to Ukraine. That will be a main issue at the summit today.

We'll meet with President Zelenskyy. He will address the summit. And as you said, this will be an historic summit. It will be a transformative summit where we will make decisions that will actually change this alliance for many years to come.

We will agree a new Strategic Concept, the blueprint for NATO into the future: a more dangerous world, a more competitive world. We will agree the biggest overhaul of our collective defense deterrence since the end of the cold war, and the U.S. is, of course, very much part of that.

And then we will invite Finland and Sweden to join NATO. And that demonstrates that NATO's door is open. It demonstrates that President Putin has not succeeded in closing NATO's door. He is getting the opposite of what he wants. He wants less NATO; President Putin is getting more NATO by Finland and Sweden joining our alliance.

And we will agree a comprehensive assistance package for Ukraine. And then I also welcome the fact that we are able now to state that actually, that European allies and Canada are stepping up with more troops, higher readiness, and also increased defense spending. New figures shows that they have added 350 billion extra U.S. dollars for defense since we made the pledge back in 2014.

So, all in all, this demonstrates unity and the strength of our alliance. So thank you, Joe.

President Biden. Well, you know, I was asked about this one—about Finland and Sweden—when each of their leaders came to the White House. And I said Putin was looking for the "Finlandization" of Europe. He's going to get the "NATO-ization" of Europe. And that's exactly what he didn't want, but exactly what needs to be done to guarantee security for Europe.

And I think it's necessary, and I'm looking forward to it happening formally.

Secretary General Stoltenberg. Thank you so much again.

President Biden. Thank you.

Secretary General Stoltenberg. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:17 a.m. at the Institución Ferial de Madrid convention center. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Sauli Niinistö of Finland; and Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson of Sweden. Secretary General Stoltenberg referred to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine.

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